

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/965,435

Examiner

Eric Hug

Applicant(s)

BECK, DAVID A.

Art Unit

1731

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the amendment filed on May 6, 2003.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-24.
3. ☐ The drawings filed on _____ are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 - * Certified copies not received: _____.
5. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 - (a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
6. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application. **THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

7. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
8. ☒ CORRECTED DRAWINGS must be submitted.
 - (a) ☒ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☒ to Paper No. 4.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the proposed drawing correction filed _____, which has been approved by the Examiner.
 - (c) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No. _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet.

9. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No. _____ |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449), Paper No. _____ | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment |
| 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material | 8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance |
| | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Response to Amendment

The following is in response to the amendment filed on May 6, 2003.

Claims 1-24 are allowed.

Reasons for Allowance

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claim 23 is allowed, because the prior art does not disclose or suggest a papermaking machine comprising a semi-permeable membrane configured for carrying a fiber web, conveying rolls for carrying the semi-permeable membrane and/or the web, a source of cleaning fluid, an applicator for applying the cleaning fluid to the semi-permeable membrane, and a press for pressing the membrane and flushing cleaning fluid therethrough.

With respect to Applicant's arguments, the present invention of claim 23 reads over the applied prior art references which disclose devices for treating papermaking felts, forming fabrics, and the like, but do not teach a papermachine comprising the above claimed combination of features for cleaning a semi-permeable membrane and flushing cleaning fluid therefrom. It is also understood that a semi-permeable membrane has low air permeability and is structural distinguishable from press felts and forming fabrics, making it suitable for the above means of cleaning. The present invention of claim 23 also reads over prior art papermachines having a cleaning device disposed within the endless running loop of a press felt or forming fabric. Such papermachines do not have a press for pressing and flushing cleaning fluid from the felt or

fabric, as such a press would harm the performance of the felt or fabric and hinder the papermaking operation.

Claims 1-22 and 24 are allowed for reasons given in the previous office action. These reasons are reiterated in part below for Applicant's convenience:

Claims 1-6 and 8-12 are allowed, because the prior art does not disclose a method for cleaning a semi-permeable membrane configured for carrying a fiber web, whereby the method comprises applying a cleaning fluid on the semi-permeable membrane, providing an air press configured for conveying the membrane therethrough and for removing water from the fiber web carried upon the membrane, and subjecting the membrane to pressurized air to flush the cleaning fluid through the membrane.

Claims 17-19 and 21 are allowed, because the prior art does not disclose or suggest an apparatus for cleaning a semi-permeable membrane configured for carrying a fiber web, whereby the apparatus comprises a source of cleaning fluid, an applicator for applying cleaning fluid to the semi-permeable membrane, and an air press having pressurized air therein, configured for carrying the membrane and for flushing cleaning fluid through the membrane.

Claims 7, 13-16, 20, 22, and 24 are allowed, because the prior art also does not disclose or suggest a method or apparatus for cleaning a semi-permeable membrane configured for carrying a fiber web comprising a cleaning fluid and an air press, whereby the air press includes a cap roll upon which the cleaning fluid is applied and transferred to the membrane (claims 7, and 20), or whereby the press is configured for impregnating or coating the fiber web carried by

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the membrane (claim 13), or whereby a second air press is provided (claims 14-16 and 22), or whereby the air press is a sub-combination of a papermaking machine (claim 24).

The prior art does not teach using an air press for cleaning a semi-permeable membrane carrying a fiber web and carrying the membrane therethrough. Similarly, the prior art does not disclose an apparatus comprising an air press and a source of cleaning fluid for cleaning a permeable material passing therethrough. It is understood that the semi-permeable membrane claimed by the Applicant refers to a membrane having low air permeability and distinguished from papermaking press felts, forming wires, or drying fabrics having substantial air and fluid permeability.

Drawings

The drawings filed on September 27, 2001 are acceptable subject to correction of the informalities indicated on the "Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review," PTO-948, mailed with Paper No. 4 on September 11, 2002. In order to avoid abandonment, the drawing informalities must now be corrected. Correction can only be effected in the manner set forth in the above noted paper.

INFORMATION ON HOW TO EFFECT DRAWING CHANGES

1. **Correction of Informalities -- 37 CFR 1.85**

New corrected drawings must be filed with the changes incorporated therein. Identifying indicia, if provided, should include the title of the invention, inventor's name, and application number, or docket number (if any) if an application number has not been assigned to the application. If this information is provided, it must be placed on the front of each sheet and centered within the top margin. If corrected drawings are required in a Notice of Allowability (PTOL-37), the new drawings **MUST** be filed within the **THREE MONTH** shortened statutory period set for reply in the "Notice of Allowability." Extensions of time may NOT be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 for filing the corrected drawings after the mailing of a Notice of Allowability. The drawings should be filed as a separate paper with a transmittal letter addressed to the Official Draftsperson.

2. **Corrections other than Informalities Noted by Draftsperson on form PTO-948.**

All changes to the drawings, other than informalities noted by the Draftsperson, **MUST** be made in the same manner as above except that, normally, a highlighted (preferably red ink) sketch of the changes to be incorporated into the new drawings **MUST** be approved by the examiner before the application will be allowed. No changes will be permitted to be made, other than correction of informalities, unless the examiner has approved the proposed changes.

Timing of Corrections

Applicant is required to submit acceptable corrected drawings within the time period set in the Office action. See 37 CFR 1.185(a). Failure to take corrective action within the set (or extended) period will result in **ABANDONMENT** of the application.

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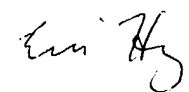
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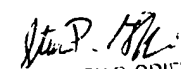
Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Eric Hug whose telephone number is 703 308-1980. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Steven Griffin can be reached on 703 308-1164. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703 872-9310 for regular communications and 703 872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703 308-0651.


jch
June 12, 2003


STEVEN P. GRIFFIN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1700